

STORY 76

THE SELF-RESPECT AND CONTENTMENT OF A MUSLIM

IBRAHIM HARBI was a good Muslim of his days. Once he fell ill. He had his wife and daughters to wait upon and nurse him. But of the necessities of life there was very little in the house which caused the family great distress. The Caliph of the day was informed of the straitened circumstances of the family and sent them a purse containing one thousand pieces of gold. But Ibrahim refused to accept the gift, although his daughter considering their state of destitution insisted on accepting it. The matter was being debated between the father and his daughter when Abul Kasim Jilli who was a friend of the family turned up. Ibrahim seeing him said, "Look here Abul Kasim. My daughter is quarrelling with me. You have come in good time, so arbitrate between us. Daughter! State your case before my friend."

The girl said, "Listen uncle, father is confined to bed with illness. Mother and myself are engaged in looking after him. We are so destitute that we have nothing to eat not to say of getting a doctor and medicine. In these circumstances, a neighbour was considerate enough to send us some provisions, but father refused to take them. Another friend sent us money, father again refused. Now the Caliph has sent one thousand pieces of gold, but father is sending the money

back. Is it wise or proper?"

When she had concluded, Ibrahim addressing his friend said, "Listen Abul Kasim! My contention is that alms are lawful for beggars and mendicants only. I contend that we are not beggars because just now I have in my possession twelve pamphlets written by me on various philosophical subjects. If I offer them for sale, they can at the least fetch several thousand pieces of silver. In the circumstances how do we deserve Zakat and charity." This argument silenced the girl and she allowed her father to have his own way.